villagers falling under Tetar, Jethian, Airr and Naudiha post offices under Gaya district in regard to connect these post offices with Gaya Head Office in place of Nawada:

(b) whether it is a fact that Nawada being the Head Office, villagers and facing great difficulty,

(c) if so, what steps Government have taken in this regard;

(d) by when these post offices will be connected with Gaya Head Office: and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) One representation from the villagers under Airr EDSO has been received to connect this post office with Gaya Head Office in place of Nawada.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) to (e) Do not arise in view of (b) above.

Extension in local call distance

1616. SHRI SURYABHAN PATIL VAHADANE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria fixed by Government for local call facility in Rural and Urban Areas;

(b) whether Government are considering to connect local call facility from every village to their respective district Headquarters in the country;

(c) whether Government have any proposal under consideration to increase local call distance upto 500 km. in near future; and

(d) if so, by when it would be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) The present policy envisage local call facility (without STD Code) is allowed:—

(i) Within SDCA

(ii) When Two Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs) are adjacent

(iii) When the radial distance between the two Short Distance Charging

Centres (SDCCs) of two SDCAs falling in the same or adjacent Long Distance Charging Areas (LDCAs) is upto 50 Kms.

(iv) When the radial distance between two Long Distance Charging Centres (LDCCs) of two non-adjacent LDCAs is upto 50 Kms.

Local calls under category (i) & (ii) above, are allowed irrespective of the distance involved as such Villages/District Head Quarters failling in the above categories, only are provided local call facilities.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Vacant posts in Andhra Pradesh Postal Department

1617. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of vacancies in postal department in Andhra Pradesh, category-wise;

(b) by when they are likely to be filled up; and

(c) the number of new post offices to be opened in Andhra Pradesh during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) The number of vacancies in Postal Department in Andhra Pradesh, category-wise is as below:

Group A	6
Group C	843
Group D	104

(b) Promotional posts in Group 'A' and Group 'C' will be filled through Departmental Promotion Committee and Departmental Examinations. However, direct recruitment vacancies in Group 'C' and 'D' cadres can be filled after lifting of the present ban on recruitment.

(c) A target of opening 15 new Branch Post Offices and 2 new Sub-Post Offices had been fixed for Andhra Pradesh for the year 2000-2001. Opening of new post offices is subject to the fulfillment of department norms and sanctioning of required posts by Ministry of Finance.